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Summary record of the 8th meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Wenaweser ..... (Liechtenstein)
later: Mr. Morikawa (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Japan)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 97: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/57/115)

Agenda item 98: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/57/31, A/57/67-E/2002/45, A/57/139 and Corr.1, A/57/218 and Corr.1 and 352; E/CN.5/2002/2; A/C.3/57/L.6)

Agenda item 99: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/57/93)

1. **Ms. Pulido** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that they welcomed the integrated approach of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/57/115) and concurred that there was a clear and close link between the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit and the special session and the promotion of and follow-up to all the international conferences and summits held over the past two years. Moreover, the agreements reached at those conferences and summits provided an additional dimension to the social development goals elaborated during the World Summit and the twenty-fourth special session.

2. She recalled that the head of her delegation, speaking on the issue of social development at the fifty-sixth session, had verbalized the longstanding wish of the developing world when he had called for an effective system of international cooperation for development to support national efforts. The Monterrey Consensus had provided a platform for such cooperation and heralded the start of an era of increased financing for development. The International Conference on Financing for Development had also successfully addressed the issue of reforming the international financial system. Such a reform would have a positive impact on the implementation of three key elements of the Copenhagen Programme of Action: improving structural-adjustment programmes, promoting an enabling environment for social development and strengthening frameworks for cooperation at the international, regional and subregional levels.

3. Turning to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, she said that it had culminated in the formulation of specific goals and actions in the area of poverty eradication, which was one of the three pillars on which the social-development goals reposed and was indispensable to sustainable development. In that connection, the Plan of Implementation for Agenda 21 built on the actions adopted in Copenhagen and again at the Copenhagen+5 summit and expanded upon the steps to be taken to promote a coordinated approach to the consideration of environmental, economic and social policies.

4. Social integration was another key element of the social-development goals. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, had concentrated specifically on the situation of older persons, who were often at risk of becoming marginalized: its main objective was to ensure a secure and dignified environment for those persons and to make it possible for them to participate fully in society as citizens with equal rights and opportunities. For several reasons, the Assembly on Ageing had marked a watershed for developing countries. It had highlighted the link between ageing and poverty eradication, which was of particular significance given that it was estimated that the number of older persons in those countries would have trebled by 2050. Her delegation also believed that among the most important achievements of the Assembly were the forward-looking nature of the Plan of Action and the fact that it took account of the requirements of and challenges faced by older persons in the developing world. The Group of 77 and China agreed with the Secretary-General's remarks, contained in his report on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/57/93), concerning the need to strengthen the United Nations programme on ageing so as to fulfil in an effective and timely manner its tasks arising from the implementation of the outcome of the Assembly.

5. She announced that her delegation would be submitting a draft resolution on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing and hoped that the Committee would adopt it by consensus.

6. ***Mr. Morikawa*** *(Japan), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

7. **Ms. Joseph** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), welcomed the statement made by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. As stated in the *Report on the World Social Situation 2001*, world income inequality had increased in the 1990s despite unprecedented economic growth. The world social situation had worsened, with the Johannesburg Summit 2002 having highlighted poverty as a main impediment to sustainable human development. The Declaration of Margarita adopted on Margarita Island, Venezuela, in December 2001 by the Heads of State or Government of the Association of Caribbean States, had reflected those concerns, calling for a coordinated response.

8. CARICOM supported several other regional initiatives, including the Nadi Declaration on African, Caribbean and Pacific Solidarity in a Globalized World and the New Partnership for Africa's Development . It also endorsed the proposal to establish a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication. In view of the recent disturbing findings by the Secretary-General that the world was falling short in meeting the Millennium development goals, CARICOM welcomed the Secretary-General's proposed Millennium Campaign to make those commitments better known and to ensure that they were the focus of global action.

9. The mandates contained in the Millennium Declaration, the Durban Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Declaration should be fulfilled as a matter of priority and as essential components of the Copenhagen Consensus. In that connection, CARICOM commended the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for organizing regional workshops for capacity-building and networking, including in the Caribbean.

10. CARICOM was grateful to the Government of the Netherlands for helping to fund preparation by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) of a Compendium of selected social statistics of five Caribbean countries (1995-2001). It also welcomed the progress achieved regarding the Second Regional Cooperation Framework for Latin America and the Caribbean (2001-2005) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Her delegation was pleased that UNDP planned to deepen its work in partnership with regional development banks, ECLAC, national think-tanks and academic institutions.

11. Concerning youth, it should be noted that some 60 per cent of the world's population was below the age of 25, with 85 per cent of young people living in developing countries. The dangers of a growing population of disaffected youth were becoming increasingly clear, since what society did to young people, young people did to society. Potentially the most productive workers in a developing economy, young people must be integrated in a meaningful and sustainable way.

12. Society's youth also suffered the effects of trauma and violence, sexual abuse and neglect, with global youth-homicide rates having more than doubled since 1985. The almost unfathomable plight of the child soldier was also relevant to the agenda item under discussion.

13. CARICOM had approved a Regional Strategy for Youth Development to facilitate the development and reprogramming of youth initiatives at the national level. Targeted activities up to 2006 included the creation of youth-information and social-statistics databases, training and education initiatives and the creation of youth umbrella organizations. Strategy also sought to give young people a voice by promoting their participation in decision-making. Moreover, CARICOM countries had launched intersectoral community-based projects promoting economic participation, poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods and health, as well as projects to raise awareness, change behaviour and empower young people to educate and counsel their peers.

14. CARICOM endorsed the coordinating role to be played by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) under the United Nations Literacy Decade. CARICOM countries had been active in the education-for-all initiative. In May 2002, an inter-agency meeting on youth had been convened in Barbados to explore mechanisms for increasing collaboration and coordination among key stakeholders.

15. CARICOM attached importance to United Nations initiatives in favour of persons with disabilities, noting that some 10 per cent of the world's population had disabilities, two thirds of whom lived in developing countries. CARICOM also wished to reiterate the importance of actions taken by the

international community to strengthen the family, including work carried out by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

16. **Ms. Enkhtsetseg** (Mongolia) said that, despite progress made in improving the world social situation, many challenges and obstacles remained. It had become increasingly evident that along with greater opportunities, globalization had created situations of heightened insecurity, particularly for poor nations. Despite several decades of development efforts, the number of the world's poor remained unacceptably high.

17. Her delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that insufficient progress had been made in implementing the Millennium Declaration. The world could not afford to spend yet another decade failing to deliver on its commitments, which was why all stakeholders must redouble their efforts towards practical delivery.

18. The Government was committed to the implementation of social-development goals. It attached particular importance to the integration of social and economic policies, the promotion of a more participatory and people-centred policy-making process, the establishment and enhancement of social-security systems and enhanced access to basic social services. Priorities for action included the creation of an equitable social environment, improvement of the quality of education and health assistance, the reduction of poverty and unemployment and raised standards of living. The national human-security strategy encompassed the economic, social, environmental, political and legal aspects of development.

19. Mongolia had also been actively cooperating with other States at the regional and international levels. A United Nations expert group meeting on creating a supportive environment for cooperatives, held in Mongolia in May 2002, had reaffirmed the importance of cooperatives in attaining those goals.

20. Her Government looked forward to cooperating with other Member States towards implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in order to address the challenges faced by older people.

21. **Ms. Bakalem** (Algeria) said that, despite concerted international efforts, world poverty had increased, especially in Africa. The situation was further exacerbated by human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), the spread of armed conflict and environmental degradation. Global action for poverty eradication was thus all the more urgent.

22. At the national level, her Government's poverty-eradication measures included school-attendance support for children from poor families, assistance for families in need and housing assistance. The Government also saw employment as crucial to poverty eradication and sought to provide young people with micro-credit and training facilities.

23. Recognizing that the family was a tool for social cohesion and national solidarity, her Government welcomed the follow-up to the preparations for the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004.

24. The situation of older persons and their well-being and participation in development should remain a priority for Governments. A national programme modelled on the International Plan of Action on Ageing, which had the support of civil society, had led to the development of a national social-policy strategy that empowered older people.

25. Her delegation also supported the idea of elaborating a convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Under a recently promulgated law in favour of disabled persons' rights, a special fund was being established in Algeria for that purpose.

26. **Archbishop Martino** (Observer for the Holy See) said that he welcomed the references to social-development issues that had appeared in the outcome documents of major conferences: the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, in drawing attention to the significance of social development and human well-being for all, had stressed the need to address the structural causes of social problems, especially poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, and their distressing consequences. That theme was echoed in the Johannesburg Political Declaration, in which States made a commitment to promote human development, achieve universal prosperity and peace and ensure that their collective hope for sustainable development was realized. Furthermore, his delegation agreed with the Secretary-General's assertion that all those issues were interrelated and concerned all countries, regardless of

their level of development. It was vital to place human beings at the centre of sustainable-development strategies, since real progress could be achieved only by recognizing the essential role of individuals as agents for their own development.

27. The Holy See had established the Pontifical Council for the Family, charged with the promotion of the family as the basic unit of society and the protection of the basic functions of the family, and would continue to resist any attempts to define the family that challenged Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

28. Regarding persons with disabilities, the Holy See had taken part in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, and looked forward to the possibility of drafting that Convention. Since the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons in 1975, there had been significant scientific and technical advances and a deeper understanding of the situation of persons with disabilities, and in that connection the Pope had recently expressed the hope that the dignity of such persons would be effectively recognized and protected.

29. He assured the Committee that the Holy See would continue to work towards a better future by recognizing each individual's human dignity.

30. **Mr. Zheglov** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation continued to support a priority focus on social development within the United Nations system. It particularly welcomed the work being conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the social impact of globalization, which had promoted broad public debate on the issue.

31. Concerning implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, the regional strategy of action recently adopted in Berlin would be incorporated at the federal level. His delegation welcomed the proposal to elaborate an international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of disabled persons. It also favoured improving the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 48/96, annex), which had long guided national efforts.

32. The Government continued to devote more funds to the social field. Indeed, the social budget for 2003 would top the current allocation by 30 per cent, allowing new programmes to be launched, including a programme in support of young families. Salary reforms were also envisaged, with a view to increasing per capita income. The reform of pensions, student-maintenance grants, child benefits and other forms of social assistance was also under way. The social thrust of budgetary policy was aimed at furthering implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Millennium Declaration, with a focus on poverty eradication and social integration.

33. **Mr. Gallegos** (Ecuador) said that his Government regarded social development as an inalienable right and had consequently established the Social Front, an inter-ministerial body responsible for social policy. Twenty-five per cent of the national budget was currently being allocated to that area, the primary objective being poverty reduction.

34. In addition to the social programmes introduced as part of the emergency and medium-term social plans, the Government was seeking to implement a proactive social-development policy focusing on education and job creation for traditionally marginalized groups. In that connection, he highlighted the creation of a scholarship scheme to enable child workers to return to school and the implementation of a bilingual education programme for the indigenous population.

35. Ecuador particularly appreciated the support of the United Nations specialized agencies, which had become essential allies of the Government in the formulation and implementation of the emergency and medium-term social plans.

36. However, much remained to be done if Ecuador was to achieve the social development goals drawn up at the various United Nations conferences and summits. Many of the country's problems were due to global inequalities in the social and economic fields: poverty and other social ills were exacerbated by developing countries' protectionist economic policies and the enormous burden of external debt. It had become clear that the current economic order represented an obstacle to the political, economic and social development of developing countries, and therefore he called for the design of a new international financial infrastructure which would strike a balance between ethics and solidarity and the distribution of wealth. He urged developed countries to reflect on the situation of

developing countries, stressing that underdevelopment was a threat not only to democracy but also to the future of the planet as a whole. Only coordinated efforts leading to the conclusion of a new international social agreement would remove that threat.

37. Turning to the issue of persons with disabilities, he said that Ecuador had been the proud recipient of the 2002 Franklin D. Roosevelt International Disability Award. Many public and private institutions had been working to promote the rights of persons with disabilities for over 20 years and were committed to continuing the fight. As Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, Ecuador was currently preparing for a regional conference of experts to be held in Quito in 2003.

38. **Ms. Kang** Kyung-wha (Republic of Korea) said that, at the major conferences and summits held over the past year, the United Nations had rightly asserted the central place in its work of social development and human well-being and had re-dedicated itself to the goal of the Copenhagen Programme of Action, namely the creation of a society for all ages. The Government of the Republic of Korea had taken an active part in those conferences and summits and remained firmly committed to promoting all aspects of social development.

39. She wished to emphasize the role of families in addressing the multifaceted issue of social development. The Government had participated in discussions on families and family-related issues within the framework of the United Nations and would have welcomed a broader consideration of the family perspective in the latest *Report on the World Social Situation*, prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

40. Since the family was the basic unit of society and the primary agent of socialization for individuals, any measures to achieve social-development goals should take account of it as both a source of and a solution to problems. In that connection, the Republic of Korea welcomed the importance placed on families in the outcome documents of the United Nations Special Session on Children and the Second World Assembly on Ageing, and maintained that families should be supported in nurturing and caring for the most vulnerable members of society.

41. However, a new definition of the family was needed in order to respond to the changing shape of its structure. In Korea, the 2000 population census had illustrated that changing structure, showing an increase in one-parent families and a decrease in families comprising several different generations. Consequently, the Government had been endeavouring to identify the different needs of different types of families and to refine its policies accordingly. Particular efforts were being made to promote social welfare policies to ease the burden on families, the traditional caregivers. Although the Ministry of Health and Welfare was primarily responsible for family policies, it carried out some work in conjunction with other government agencies. Such interconnectedness was important in policy-making, since social-development policies encompassed many cross-cutting issues.

42. She expressed her delegation's high expectations regarding the forthcoming United Nations Literacy Decade and emphasized that, in the age of the information society, it was crucial to conceive of literacy as a much broader set of skills than simple reading, writing and understanding. The Republic of Korea had first-hand experience that the greatest resource for socio-economic development was the knowledge and skills of citizens, since the agents of change in the country had been its highly literate and motivated people.

43. She reiterated her delegation's commitment to cooperate fully with the United Nations to help societies all over the world achieve higher levels of dignity and well-being.

44. **Ms. Lewis** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the gradual ageing of populations marked a radical change in the human fabric of societies. It had been estimated that, by 2050, 1.96 billion people would be aged sixty or over and that 80 per cent of those people would be living in developing countries. Older people were consistently among the poorest in all societies and suffered significantly higher-than-average exclusion rates, the repercussions of which were felt by the families and communities in which they lived. Moreover, the ageing of populations had important socio-economic implications: States were expressing concerns about the viability of their pension systems and their public sector budgets and about the impact on their health-care systems.

45. ILO believed that full employment in decent conditions was a viable and productive way of meeting the ageing challenge. Greater emphasis should be placed on policies promoting economic growth, sustainable development and job creation, especially in developing countries, where conventional social-security systems applied to less than 20 per cent of the labour force and where few older people were able to afford the luxury of retirement.

46. The Madrid Plan of Action recognized that ageing raised important gender concerns. Women were continuing to live longer than men, but were worse off financially than their male counterparts once they reached retirement. This was due in part to their receiving lower salaries, but also to that fact that they were more often engaged in non-remunerated activities such as caring for relatives.

47. As part of the follow-up to its Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, ILO would issue a report on the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation and would address preconceptions and stereotypes about older people.

48. She believed that it was essential to mainstream ageing in the global development agenda, and stressed that ILO was working towards fulfilling the common commitment to aspire for an active and inclusive society for all ages. Lastly, ILO strongly advocated abolishing the subjective stigma attached to the term "retired", which associated the right to a pension with final exclusion from economic and social life.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.